

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation, the kind so eloquently foretold by George Orwell. The public gets into information from the media; it places faith in a trust that was laid out by the founding fathers, that of the function of journalism and media as a "fourth estate." If ANY BRANCH of the media poses as news and lies to the public for its own purposes, IT SHOULD BE COMPELLED TO STATE THAT IT IS NOT NEWS, BUT OPINION. AIR TIME SHOULD BE GIVEN TO PROGRAMS WITH OPPOSING VIEWS.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line-- valueless, empty or biased programming-- and less of what we need for our democracy. the consolidation of the media into a monolithic corporation that is no longer a public servant but a mouthpiece of government or corporate interest is a danger to our democracy. Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.